

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-33 (canceled)

34. (currently amended) A polishing apparatus comprising:

a polishing platen;

a polishing pad overlying the polishing platen, the polishing pad having a central region and a peripheral region, the central region having a first front surface and the peripheral region having a second front surface, wherein at least a portion of the second front surface lies below the first front surface; and

a carrier overlying the polishing pad, wherein the polishing platen is further characterized as having a tapered region, and wherein the at least a portion of said second front surface of said peripheral region of the polishing pad overlies the tapered region.

35. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the peripheral region comprises a horizontal region.

36. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the peripheral region comprises a tapered region.

37. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the peripheral region comprises a grooved region.

38. (original) The apparatus, of claim 37, wherein the grooved region is further characterized as being U-shaped.

39. (original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the grooved region is further

characterized as being V shaped.